

NEWS RELEASE



STATE OF ALABAMA
Department of
Industrial Relations
News For Immediate Release
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WORKERS 50 AND OVER ELIGIBLE FOR NEW TRADE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA, September 26, 2003 The Alabama Department of Industrial Relations has implemented a federal program for unemployed workers 50 years of age and older, who may qualify for Alternative Trade Adjustment Assistance (ATAA), a program established by the Trade Act of 2002.

“ATAA, which went into effect on August 6, 2003, is an option available to eligible workers for whom retraining may not be the appropriate route to returning to work,” says Phyllis Kennedy, Industrial Relations director. “ATAA helps workers who do find re-employment by providing supplemental payments if there is a salary gap between their old job and new job.”

Workers are required to find another job not more than 26 weeks after their separation from an ATAA-certified employer. ATAA allowances cover up to 50 percent of the difference between a worker’s old wage and new wage while employed full-time. Allowances may be paid up to a maximum of \$10,000 during a two-year eligibility period. Workers who earn over \$50,000 per year are not eligible for ATAA.

“If a company is certified for both Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) and ATAA, workers must choose between the two,” says Kennedy. “They cannot receive benefits under both programs.”

The TAA program, implemented by the Trade Act of 1974, and amended by the Trade Act of 2002, provides benefits for workers who may have become unemployed as a result of increased imports.

Those who are eligible for either TAA, or both TAA and ATAA, will be notified in writing by Industrial Relations once they are identified. The notification will inform them of how to apply for the programs.

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Industrial Relations is an umbrella organization of State government which administers: the State Employment Service, Unemployment Insurance, Workers’ Compensation, and Labor Market Information. Smaller programs also administered include Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation, Mine Safety and Inspection, and Surface Mining of Non-Fuel Minerals. For more information on DIR visit the Web site: www.dir.state.al.us.